



*David Westin*

# Don't Blame the Networks

The quadrennial ritual is underway again. No, I don't mean the presidential election. And I don't mean the political conventions. What I'm talking about is a ritual that can unite Americans of all political persuasions: the one in which everyone gets together and condemns the broadcast networks for not carrying more of the conventions in prime time.

This year, though, the usual condemnations of ABC, CBS and NBC feel oddly out of date. Time and technology are passing the critics by. The days are largely gone when the three broadcast networks could decide what the American people would watch—and then get them to watch it. With the advent and expansion of cable and, more recently, the Internet—including streaming video that looks a lot like television—there are just too many alternatives available to the audience at all times of the day and night. Now you'll attract an audience only if what you have to offer is seen to be better than hundreds, indeed thousands, of alternatives.

We've moved from a media oligarchy to a media democracy. We've gone from a few programmers in New York and Los Angeles deciding what people will watch to the people themselves voting with their remote controls every night, really every minute, on what they want.

This changes fundamentally the decision a news division makes about what it covers. If we broadcast extended convention coverage when most Americans would rather be watching something else, our audiences will flock to the alternative programming. If the conventions themselves were as interesting as they were in 1948 or 1956—or even 1968—then we wouldn't have this problem. But as we all know too well, they aren't. As much as we might like to coerce people into watching what we think to be good for them, we simply don't have that power.

But the new technology also gives us tools that we never had before. Where we once had to make an up-or-down decision—either take the event and present it on the full broadcast network or don't take it at all—we now have an array of ways to reach our audiences. Cable news networks were the first to move us in this direction, and NBC was the first network to have the alternative of leaving its regular broadcast network programming alone and covering news events only on its

cable channel.

This year we've taken it one step further. On ABC News Now, we're covering the conventions from gavel to gavel on a service that is available simultaneously in a variety of ways—from over-the-air digital television to digital cable to the Internet to cell phones. The idea is simple: For those Americans who want to see the two conventions from beginning to end, we want to make it available to them wherever they are and on any device they choose to use. No longer does our audience have to come to us; we'll come to our audience.

Many see this as a good thing, giving the audience a much richer smorgasbord to choose from. In the case of ABC News, we'll be covering about 24 hours of the two conventions in prime time, either on the broadcast network or on our new service, compared with only eight hours four years ago. To be sure, it may not be quite as easy to find as when people had one television that effectively had three channels. But it's there for those who want it, whenever and however they want to get it.

Others may see all this as a bad thing and long for the "good old days" when three broadcast networks could bring the entire country to the collective hearth of the television for major events, such as the Apollo 11 moon landing or the funeral of President John F. Kennedy.

But whether you see it as good or bad, it is surely inevitable. Technology made possible the choice that we're confronting, and the American people have resoundingly voted in favor of that choice. We're not going back, any more than we're returning to a time before automobiles or electricity.

The challenge we face is how to take this new world of media and make it a new world for great journalism. We're being given an opportunity. There are no assurances of success. The splintering of the media has not, in the past, always led to stronger journalism. With intelligence, daring and a bit of luck, maybe we can do better this time. Maybe we can earn the audience's attention through the strength of our reporting and presentation, even when there are virtually unlimited choices.

*The writer is president of ABC News.*

## **ABC NEWS NOW FAQ's**

### **1. How is ABC News covering the conventions?**

- ABC News' Peter Jennings will broadcast gavel-to-gavel coverage of both conventions on multiple platforms – this coverage is the centerpiece of a ground-breaking 14-week programming venture delivering news on the ABC Television Network, a dedicated digital channel, broadband, and wireless.
- This week Peter Jennings will anchor prime time coverage on the broadcast television network from 10:00 – 11:00 pm ET Tuesday August 31-Thursday September 2 live from New York.
- In addition, Mr. Jennings will anchor daytime and evening sessions from the convention on ABC News Now Monday through Thursday in New York, starting at about 10:00a ET on Monday, August 30. Monday night Peter will anchor our coverage on ABC News Now from 7:45p until 11:00p ET. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday he will anchor from 7:45p – 9:45p. When he is on the broadcast television network those nights, Bob Woodruff will anchor ABC News Now coverage.
- We are providing comprehensive convention coverage spanning all ABC News broadcasts, ABC News Radio, and ABCNEWS.com.

### **2 . What makes this plan ground-breaking?**

- We are offering additional convention coverage with Peter Jennings and expanded news programming to our affiliates for the first time for their digital channel from July 26 to November 2. This programming, called ABC News Now, will also be made available through broadband and wireless distribution.
- This multiplatform distribution offers the ABC News consumer news programming how, when, and where they want it.

### **3 . What is different about ABC News' convention coverage plans?**

- Peter Jennings will anchor gavel-to-gavel coverage and will be joined on television, broadband and digital by ABC News' expert team of correspondents and analysts. No other network is offering that kind of comprehensive coverage across multiple platforms.

### **4 . Have any ABC affiliates agreed to carry ABC News Now?**

- All 10 ABC Owned Stations are committed to digital carriage. They, like non-owned affiliates, will be able to arrange for cable coverage within their local markets.
- The 10 ABC Owned Stations are WABC (New York City), KABC (Los Angeles), WLS (Chicago), WPVI (Philadelphia), KGO (San Francisco), KTRK (Houston), WTVD (Raleigh/Durham), WJRT (Flint, MI), WTVG (Toledo, OH), and KFSN (Fresno, CA).
- Numerous ABC affiliates are carrying ABC News Now on their digital signal and have arranged for cable coverage within their local markets. ABC News Now reaches over 65% of the country. For a complete list of affiliate stations and channel numbers, go to [www.ABCNEWS.com](http://www.ABCNEWS.com).

**5. Who will be able to watch the broadband/wireless/digital television component?**

- ABC News Now is available through broadband to AOL members and Comcast.net subscribers, our ABC News On Demand or RealNetworks' SuperPass subscribers, as well as SBC/Yahoo and Bell South DSL service customers.
- It is available for wireless devices through MobiTV, a live streaming television service for Sprint PCS Vision.
- If an ABC station has a retransmission agreement with the local cable carrier for a channel on the digital tier, the digital news channel would be available for digital cable subscribers. Or viewers who have digital sets or a digital tuner could access the channel.

**6. What additional programming will affiliates carry over their digital television signal for the full 14-week period between July 26 and November 2?**

- ABC News Now coverage, which will be made available to all affiliates, will cover the speeches and what's happening on the floor, but by going gavel-to-gavel we have the luxury of providing our viewers even more context and analysis. That will include interviews with party leaders and elected officials, reported pieces on what it all means, and a more comprehensive look at what this election and these conventions mean.
- Beyond convention coverage, 24/7 programming on ABC News Now will cover live breaking news events, hourly newsbriefs from our anchors and news reports from ABC News correspondents.
- Also, many stations are simulcasting or repurposing their local newscasts and providing headline updates throughout the day in the local programming blocks we've built into ABC News Now.

**7. Will the programming on the digital channel (ABC News Now) look the same as if it were on the network?**

- Peter Jennings' anchored coverage on the broadcast television network will not be simulcast on ABC News Now. His hours of live primetime convention coverage on the ABC Television Network are exclusive to the ABC Television Network.
- Peter Jennings will anchor all ABC News convention coverage, and he will be joined by the same team on both television and ABC News Now. It will be the same editorial quality and expertise people expect from ABC television delivered to them on broadband or wireless or digital television.
- During the weeks between and after the conventions, Bob Woodruff, Chris Cuomo, Jake Tapper, Mark Halperin, Hari Sreenivasan, Gigi Stone, and other ABC News correspondents will anchor ABC News Now programming.

**8. What is the potential audience for the digital broadcast?**

- Nearly 70 ABC affiliates are carrying ABC News Now – reaching over 65% of the country.
- The digital cable universe for those 70 stations is over 6.5 million. Nationwide there are over 22 million digital cable homes. So as additional affiliates sign on to carry our coverage that 6.5 million could go as high as 22 million.

**9. How big is the subscriber base for the broadband programming?**

- ABC News Now is available to anyone on the Internet through an ABC News On Demand subscription at [www.ABCNEWS.com](http://www.ABCNEWS.com). In addition, it is available to 36 million Internet

viewers through AOL (approx. 24 million members), Comcast.net (more than 5.7 million subscribers), RealNetworks' SuperPass (1 million subscribers), SBC Yahoo! (approx. 2.7 million subscribers), and Bell South FastAccess (1.8 million subscribers) who provide this programming at no extra charge to their customers.

- As of March 1, the Pew Internet & American Life Project finds that 68 million adult Americans log on via broadband either at home or work. Fully 48 million adult Americans have broadband connection at home.
- Our Democratic Convention coverage set usage records for most of our broadband partners – ABC News Now on Tuesday night logged over 250,000 unique live streams on AOL alone. Our programming was the single largest live streaming event in AOL history – bigger than live Josh Groban and Dave Matthews concerts.

**1 0. What will this programming mean for ABC affiliates?**

- It will offer added value to their viewers who can receive a digital signal, with expanded news coverage in their local markets.

**1 1. Will there be local news breaks?**

- It's possible – it is up to each station to decide.
- One of the aspects of this programming venture we're most excited about is that we could offer international, national, and local news all in one place.

**1 2. What is multicasting?**

- As TV stations begin to migrate to digital technology, they now can transmit several signals in a bandwidth that used to carry just one. Stations will now be able to offer expanded programming on these additional digital channels to consumers who have digital service.

**1 3. Do any ABC stations now offer multicasting to their viewers?**

- All 10 ABC owned stations, and many of our affiliate stations, are doing some form of multicasting. Several of ABC's owned stations have up to three additional channels that they are using for multicasting. Many stations repurpose local newscasts, provide public service programming, or offer 24 hour weather programming.

**1 4. Why offer this service now?**

- Obviously the major political conventions are coming up and there's a tight race for the presidency this year, and this provides an ideal opportunity to supplement our already outstanding ABC News coverage.

**1 5. What are the biggest obstacles to viewers seeing the digital news service?**

- The biggest problem in many cases is the fact that many cable systems do not pass on the digital service to their customers. Also, viewers without digital cable or in a market where the local cable operator does not carry the digital signal from our affiliate station must have a digital set or digital converter in order to receive the channel.

**16. Has any other network provided this kind of programming, distinct from TV network programming, in the past?**

No other network has used the multiplex feed for this type of coverage. As part of the digital retransmission process put in place by Washington, there has been some discussion around it, but no one has done it.

**17. What is your competition?**

- Simply put, everything that competes for the news consumer.

**18. Does ABC News Now broadband programming contain commercials?**

- Yes, it contains commercials and network promotions.
- We will not air commercials during the gavel-to-gavel programming at the conventions.

**19. Will there be commercials on the digital news channel?**

- We are working with our affiliates to add local programming and commercial inventory in addition to network commercials and promotions.
- We will not air commercials during the gavel-to-gavel programming at the conventions.

**20. How will we know who's watching?**

- This is new technology. We know how many people will have access to this programming, but at this point there is no way to measure how many people are actually watching on broadband and digital. There is no expectation that the audience will be as large as broadcast, and that's not what it should be compared to. Keep in mind, cable is available in 74 million homes and primetime audiences on some of the news channels often doesn't go much above 200,000.

**21. Are we broadcasting in HDTV?**

- No.

**22. What happens after 14 weeks?**

- We have a great deal to learn between now and November 2nd - at the end of 14 weeks, we'll carefully evaluate the response from our key audiences - the ABC News consumer, our affiliate stations, our broadband distribution partners, and the cable operators.
- 24 hour news on multiple platforms may be the future - or we may be ahead of our time.
- After 14 weeks, ABC News Now will continue to be available via broadband and wireless.

**23. Since you have no ratings, how will you measure the success of this venture?**

- First, we want to bring the same quality and expertise to ABC News Now as we do all news events.
- Second, this is experimental - we want feedback from our audience, our affiliate stations, our broadband distribution partners and the cable operators.

## ASSOCIATED PRESS

ABC News launching 24 hour service with the convention

By DAVID BAUDER

AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) - ABC News will run a 24-hour news service available on digital cable, the Internet and some cell phones through Election Day in what may be a precursor to a service offered full time in the future.

The venture, "ABC News Now," begins operating at noon Monday, presenting gavel-to-gavel coverage of the Republican National Convention, anchored by Peter Jennings.

The service will offer national and local news highlights and rerun material - "Nightline" the next day, for instance.

"We wouldn't be doing this if we didn't suspect there was a business for us in the long run," ABC News President David Westin said Thursday.

ABC News once considered, and passed on, starting a cable news affiliate that would compete with CNN, Fox News Channel and MSNBC.

Westin said "ABC News Now" would differ from those networks because it will be offered on multiple platforms and will have some local programming. ABC's affiliates are being encouraged to place some of their local news, weather and sports on the service.

Jennings will anchor a total of 23 hours of daily coverage from the GOP and Democratic conventions on "ABC News Now," in contrast to the six hours that the broadcast network will be on the air during the conventions.

The venture will offer a daily political newscast at 1 p.m. EDT during the conventions and a show, "Trail Mix," anchored by Sam Donaldson and Hari Sreenivasan.

How many people who will watch - or even be able to watch - the service is an open question.

The 10 ABC-owned stations will offer "ABC News Now" to its 3.5 million customers that have digital cable. Stations participating are in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Houston, Raleigh, N.C., Flint, Mich., Toledo, Ohio, and Fresno, Calif.

ABC is trying to persuade some of its 64 affiliates with digital capabilities - a potential 18.5 million more homes - to sign on, too.

It's also available for those with broadband Internet access. Some services, like America Online, will offer it for free as part of its monthly subscriber fee; otherwise, it will cost \$4.95 per month to subscribe.

Sprint PCS Vision phone customers will also be able to see "ABC News Now" for \$9.95 a month.

It's a true experiment; ABC has no idea how many people will be able to see or will watch if they can.

"I am eager to find out," Westin said.

He would not say how much ABC News has spent to get it operating; ABC increased its 24-hour staffing last year in anticipation of the Iraq war and after being caught flat-footed with the space shuttle explosion story.

The network will not sell advertising for "ABC News Now," although local affiliates are free to do so, Westin said.

# Now Newshounds Have More to Watch

By ERIC A. TAUB

**F**OR those who can't get enough of politics, ABC News has a treat this election season. The network will offer gavel-to-gavel coverage of the Democratic and Republican conventions, and then 24-hour news programming until the elections.

The trouble is, most TV viewers will not be able to see it. That is because the special programming will be broadcast on the ABC stations' digital subchannels.

In the digital broadcasting system, broadcasters can squeeze several channels into the space required for one standard analog version. They are named in on-screen program guides as 7.1, 7.2 and so on.

Broadcasters use these digital subchannels to transmit foreign-language feeds, infomercials, weather maps and continuously repeated local news broadcasts. To see them, viewers must have a digital TV with decoding equipment (either built in or in a set-top box) and receive the digital signals over the air or through a satellite or cable service.

The network decided to use subchannels for extended political coverage a few weeks ago, after Peter Jennings, the network's anchor, approached David Westin, the president of ABC News, about alternative means of carrying the convention.

Mr. Jennings knew that the network already offered a 24-hour news feed, ABC News Live, on the Internet. Mr. Westin thought that that sort of coverage could be extended to



Michelle V. Agins/The New York Times

**ON THE AIR** Peter Jennings will be the anchor of six hours of ABC prime-time coverage at each convention, and 19 hours for a digital subchannel.

additional platforms as well.

"We've been looking for ways of using new technologies to help stop us from losing audience share," Mr. Westin said. He and the network's affiliates had been discussing how to use the extra spectrum afforded by digital transmission for the past year, and the convention coverage provided a logical way to start, he said.

Mr. Jennings will be the anchor of six hours of prime-time coverage at each convention on the standard network broadcast, and will also present 19 hours of coverage for the digital subchannel and ABC News Live.

Between the two conventions, and through the presidential elections, the digital feed will become a 24-hour

all-news channel, always with an anchor. The news feed will be carried by ABC's 10 owned and operated stations. The network's independent affiliates "are excited about pursuing this test," said Deb McDermott, chairwoman of the ABC Affiliate Board and president of Young Broadcasting. Yet the board does not know how many affiliates will carry the second feed, or how many local cable affiliates will offer the channel to subscribers. "We're still working through the logistics," Ms. McDermott said.

ABC's competitors are not doing anything as technologically advanced. "We have cable news channels, so we don't need to use a digital subchannel," said Mark Lukasiewicz, the producer of NBC News.

The network will offer gavel-to-gavel coverage on MSNBC and streaming coverage at [www.msnbc.com](http://www.msnbc.com), plus programming on CNBC. Several Web logs will be available to users of wireless devices.

CBS will make gavel-to-gavel coverage available at no charge at [www.cbsnews.com](http://www.cbsnews.com).

One thing most viewers won't see at this year's conventions is sharp and wide high-definition images. While HDTV ownership continues to grow, neither CBS nor NBC will use the feed from the HDTV pool cameras on the convention floor, operated by the Japanese network NHK.

Mr. Westin said that ABC, which provided high-definition pool coverage of this year's State of the Union address, might try HDTV.

Limited HDTV convention coverage will be available to subscribers of HDNet, which is seen on satellite and some cable systems. The company will also offer its affiliates a second channel of gavel-to-gavel coverage in HDTV as a free service to subscribers. Dish Network says it will carry the special feed.

ABC's foray into 24-hour political news may turn out to be more than an isolated use of digital technology. Just as coverage of the Iranian hostage crisis in the 1970's became the catalyst for the emergence of the late-night news program "Nightline," Mr. Westin said he would not be surprised if this year's extended political coverage resulted in a lasting 24-hour news feed.

"This is in the back of my mind," he said. "We may be ahead of our time, but at some point, this will happen."



# ABC's low-budget ANN: News kid on the block

Peter Jennings calls ABC News' experiment a "guerrilla operation." Correspondent Chris Cuomo says it has "unvarnished appeal." Tune in, says producer Mike Clemente, and you'll know you're not "driving Dad's Oldsmobile."

What they're talking about is ABC News Now, a low-budget channel now available via an increasing number of digital TV channels over the air and on cable in major cities, the Internet and, in some cases, your cellphone.

ANN came of age during the recent Democratic National Convention, when Jennings anchored gavel-to-gavel, while ABC News limited network coverage to three hours in prime time.

ABC won't say how many people tune in at any given time, but ANN drew a record 250,000 computer "hits" one night during the convention on partner AOL. Disney President Robert Iger says the 14-week, 24/7 experiment, intended to last through the November election, will probably become permanent.

Competitors dismiss ANN as a desperate effort by ABC to stay relevant in the modern news era and compete with Fox News, CNN and MSNBC. (ABC dropped plans to get into cable news in the mid '90s.) But as the government pushes for broadcasters' transition to digital as early as 2006, "multicasting" channels such as ABC's could grow in reach and importance.

ABC News chief David Westin concedes that while ANN "was driven by necessity," he also says it could rival cable news someday.

"We may be getting an early look at the future of electronic journalism," he says. "We're going from a world where our audience had to come to us to a world where we're going to come to our audience, where we are accessible all times of day and night anywhere you are and whatever device you have: television, computer, phone."

Sometimes, ANN's production quality is on par with the best ABC News offers, especially when Jennings is anchoring, as he will be in two weeks at the Republican convention in New York. Other times it resembles cheesy cable-access channels, with green anchors such



**Unvarnished:** Peter Jennings chats with Wonbo Woo at the convention.

as Cuomo and blurry video.

Offerings include a mix of live press conferences and breaking news that resembles cable news, plus plenty of chitchat on various aspects of the presidential campaign. A long segment last week dealt with celebrity-sponsored "get out the vote" T-shirts.

Clemente, ANN's executive producer, says he wants to reach out to as many sources as possible and "not just the traditional voices or inside-the-Beltway people."

As such, in Boston, ANN invited protestors to talk about their gripes. "Sometimes in a 10-minute tirade there's a little message there." Last week, Cuomo, moonlighting from *PrimeTime Live*, where he is a correspondent, interviewed a political poet who ended up reading a poem for three minutes — unheard-of on broadcast news, rare on cable news.

"Knowing that we're trying new things, that we are able to use new technologies and new faces on air, is an exciting experience," says Wonbo Woo, a *World News Tonight* producer who does man-on-the-street interviews for ANN.

He chatted up Jennings at the Boston convention and will do it again in New York. Armed with laptop, video camera and cellphone, Woo is a one-man reporter, cameraman, producer and editor.

"This new technology gives us the ability to go out in the field and broadcast live from anywhere with high-speed Internet access — wired or wireless — using equipment we'd have with us anyhow. No satellite dishes, no video-phones, no bulky added equipment," Woo says.

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# Cable systems pick up convention coverage

By ED BARK  
Television Critic

Digital-cable subscribers in the Dallas-Fort Worth area now can dial up a fourth 24-hour national news network — at least through election day.

The newborn ABC News Now, which debuted with gavel-to-gavel coverage of last month's Democratic National Convention, has landed spots on the Comcast (Channel 225) and Charter (Channel 175) cable systems. Its on-screen partner is ABC affiliate WFAA-TV (Channel 8), whose recently launched Xpress 8.2 digital outlet provides local weather updates and a bottom-of-the-screen news crawl in tandem with News Now's mix of live and taped news coverage and interviews.

ABC News president David Westin announced the network on

July 11 as a way to restore an "old-fashioned" approach to political conventions while CBS, NBC and ABC's broadcast mother ships were reducing coverage to just three hours of prime time apiece.

"Are the [broadcast] networks giving the same kind of coverage they gave 12, 16, 20 years ago? Absolutely not," ABC News anchor Peter Jennings recently told television critics. "Things change. I think we have to change with them."

News Now also will offer gavel-to-gavel coverage of the Republican National Convention, which begins Aug. 30 in New York City.

ABC's commitment to News Now ends after the Nov. 2 presidential election but could be extended based on viewer response. It currently resembles the on-air look of CNN's Headline News, with vari-

ous printed graphics reducing the video image to about two-fifths of the screen.

Channel 8 president and general manager Kathy Clements said the new channel "is an example of how multicasting will enable us to better serve our communities through our coverage of the political process."

Xpress 8.2 previously had been available only to viewers with high-definition televisions or special receiving equipment. Dave Muscaro, vice president of strategic alliances for Channel 8, said that Comcast and Charter so far have not committed to carrying Xpress 8.2 beyond election day.

Channel 8 is owned by Belo Corp., which also is the parent company of *The Dallas Morning News* and the Dallas-based TXCN cable news network (Channel 38).





July 29, 2004

## **Jennings adapts to new era**

The 'frustrated' ABC anchor spends bulk of convention time off network TV.

By Elizabeth Jensen

BOSTON — It was 8:30 p.m. Eastern time Monday and ABC News anchor Peter Jennings wanted the camera to cut to him so he could make a comment about something happening on the floor of the Democratic National Convention. He rapidly opened and closed his hand — a common off-camera gesture for talking — trying to get the attention of his floor manager.

Eventually, Jennings made his point. But was anyone in America, other than ABC News employees, listening?

Jennings wasn't broadcasting on the ABC Network, which, like NBC and CBS this year, is offering just three hours of prime-time convention coverage all week. Instead, ABC mounted a last-minute, low-budget effort to have Jennings anchor for several hours each night for a decidedly different environment, a newscast that can be seen by some Internet subscribers and on high-number digital TV channels in major cities including Los Angeles and New York. The experiment will run for 14 weeks, through the election.

Jennings, who calls the effort a "guerrilla operation," sees the digital channel/webcast as a potentially visionary move that could eventually be the standard operating mode as younger viewers shun the networks for alternative media. In four to eight years, he said, "this may have been a pioneering effort," adding that the operation "has the suggestion of a new world order." But he admits, "We're doing this because we're up against a reality. The network will only give us an hour a night."

This means that while NBC's Tom Brokaw holds forth on the convention from a sky box above the floor, Jennings spends much of his time squirreled away in a cramped two-room hideaway with concrete floors, curtain dividers and a rolling metal cart for a TV stand. It's convenient for his frequent forays onto the convention floor, but when Jennings is on air from the studio, viewers see a fake backdrop.

NBC still pays for prime real estate because it has a full cable news network, MSNBC, to share its coverage and costs. ABC has no such outlet, because it decided years ago to abandon its own launch of a cable news network, and a hoped-for CNN merger never came to fruition.

ABC's competitors paint a picture of Jennings and his team as voices talking into the void, with no one listening or watching.

"I understand their frustration," said Mark Lukasiewicz, the executive producer of NBC News' political coverage. "They only have one platform, and they are trying to find another." But he said NBC, in addition to MSNBC, also airs its reports on CNBC and Spanish-language Telemundo, among other places.

Jennings says his rivals are also frustrated at network cutbacks. "The truth of the matter is, we are all of us frustrated. We come to these quadrennial events and then we don't get to talk about it ... so of course that's going to be a cause of frustration."

Monday night's Web traffic was encouraging. From 7 to 11 p.m. Eastern time Monday, ABC drew 210,000 users on AOL, making it the largest "live streaming event" ever on the online service. Tuesday did better, with close to 250,000 users. But such numbers are still a pittance compared with the 4.4 million viewers who watched convention coverage on ABC's TV channel for the hour on Monday.

The digital operation, which is called ABC News Now, has had some successes. Guests such as former Democratic candidates Howard Dean and Al Sharpton chatted with Jennings on Monday night, apparently unconcerned about how many would or wouldn't be watching. "No one has said no to us, to the best of my knowledge," Jennings said.

But there have also been technical glitches, as well as hours of time to fill. When the jacket-wearing Jennings isn't on the air, the channel, which is up 24 hours a day, sometimes has a man in a T-shirt reading mail.

"ABC News Now" is available through owned and affiliated stations' digital broadcast spectrum and/or digital cable in markets representing 65.09% US coverage. As of September 1, the following affiliates had signed on to carry "ABC News Now:"

<u>Affiliate</u>	<u>Market</u>	<u>Digital Cable Channel</u>	<u>Over the Air Channel</u>
WBMA	Alabama-Birmingham		33-2
KNXV	Arizona-Phoenix		15.2
KATV	Arkansas-Little Rock	Comcast - 195	22-2
KAIT	Arkansas-Jonesboro		9.3
KABC	California-Los Angeles	Adelphia Digital Cable - 190	7.2
		Comcast - 194	
		Cox Communications - 807	
		Time Warner Cable - 1100	
		Charter Digital Cable - 175	
KGO	California-San Francisco-Oakland	Alameda Power & Telecom - 141	7.2
		RCN - 140	
KXTV	California-Sacramento		10.2
KFSN	California-Fresno-Visalia	Comcast - 194	9 or 30
KRCR	California-Chico-Redding		34-2
KGTV	California-San Diego		
KMGH	Colorado-Denver	Comcast Digital Cable - 207	
WTNH	Connecticut-Hartford-New Haven	Comcast Digital Cable - 194	
WJLA	District of Columbia	Comcast Montgomery-Prince William - 194	7.2 or 39-2
		Comcast Washington, DC - 194	
		Comcast Reston - Arlington -Alexandria - 225	
		Cox digital cable - 807	
		Starpower digital cable - 155	
		DC digital cable - 81	
WWSB	Florida-Sarasota	Comcast - 194	52-2
WPLG	Florida-Miami-Fort Lauderdale		10.2
WJXX	Florida-Jacksonville		10.2
WZVN	Florida-Fort Myers-Naples	Comcast - 194	41.2
		Time Warner - 208	
WFTV	Florida-Orlando-Daytona Beach	Bright House digital cable - 1091	39B
WSB	Georgia-Atlanta		2.2
WLS	Illinois-Chicago	WOW! - 100	7.2 or 52.2

		Comcast - 217	
WPTA	Indiana-Fort Wayne		24-2
WRTV	Indiana-Indianapolis	Comcast - 64	
		Insight Communications - 64	
WBND	Indiana-South Bend		69
WQAD	Iowa-Davenport-R. Island-Moline	Mediacom digital cable - D707	8-3
WOI	Iowa-Des Moines		59
KCAU	Iowa-Sioux City		30
WHAS	Kentucky-Louisville	Insight Communications-130	
		Comcast - 79	
WTVQ	Kentucky-Lexington		36.2
WSIL	Kentucky-Paducah		34-1
WBRZ	Louisiana-Baton Rouge		13-2
WGNO	Louisiana-New Orleans		15-2
KATC	Louisiana-Lafayette		3-2
WMAR	Maryland-Baltimore		2-2
WCVB	Massachusetts-Boston	Comcast - 194	
		RCN - 155	
WJRT	Michigan-Flint	Comcast - 182	36-2
WZZM	Michigan-Grand Rapids		13-2
	Kalamazoo		
WXYZ	Michigan-Detroit		41.3
KSTP	Minnesota-Minneapolis-St. Paul	Time Warner-1051	5-2
KLKN	Nebraska-Lincoln		31
KOLO	Nevada-Reno	Charter Cable - 14	
KTNV	Nevada-Las Vegas	Cox Communications - 129	13-2
WKBW	New York-Buffalo		38
WABC	New York - New York	Comcast - 216	7.2
		Time Warner Cable - 730	
		RCN - Manhattan - 250	
		RCN - Queens - 250	
WTVD	North Carolina-Raleigh-Durham	Time Warner of Raleigh - 212	11-2
WSOC	North Carolina-Charlotte	Time Warner Cable - 236	9-2
WWAY	North Carolina-Wilmington	Time Warner Cable - 906	3-1
WTVG	Ohio-Toledo	Buckeye Cablesystem - 614	19.2 or 13.2
		Time Warner Cable - 714	
KTUL	Oklahoma-Tulsa		8.2
KOCO	Oklahoma-Oklahoma City		7-2
KEZI	Oregon-Eugene	Comcast - 129	9.2
WPVI	Pennsylvania-Philadelphia	Comcast - 194	6.2
WHTM	Pennsylvania-Harrisburg		10.2
		Urban Digital - 300	
		Service Electric Cable - 50	
		Service Electric Digital - 662	
		Blue Ridge Communications Digital - 131	
WNEP	Pennsylvania-Wilkes Barre-Scranton		4
WLNE	Rhode Island-Providence-New Bedford		49-2
WOLO	South Carolina-Columbia	Time Warner - 816	8-2

WKRN	Tennessee-Nashville	Comcast – 180	2-2
WBBK	Tennessee-Jackson		7-3
WKPT	Tennessee-Tri Cities		27-3
WATE	Tennessee-Knoxville	Comcast - 194	6-2
KVUE	Texas-Austin	Time Warner Cable - 1512	
WFAA	Texas-Dallas-Fort Worth	Comcast - 225	8.2
KTRK	Texas-Houston	Time Warner Cable - 314	32.2
KSAT	Texas-San Antonio		48.2
KXXV	Texas-Waco		
WVEC	Virginia-Norfolk-Portsmouth		13-2
WRIC	Virginia-Richmond-Petersburg	Comcast - 194	22-2
KOMO	Washington-Seattle-Tacoma	Comcast - 114	4.2
KXLY	Washington-Spokane	Comcast - 114	4.2
WBAY	Wisconsin-Green Bay-Appleton	Time Warner - 702	23-2
WXOW	Wisconsin-LaCrosse		19.3





The **WALT DISNEY** Company

**Robert A. Iger**  
President and Chief Operating Officer

The Honorable John McCain  
Chairman  
U. S. Senate Committee on Commerce,  
Science & Transportation  
SR-241 Senate Russell Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael K. Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman McCain and Chairman Powell:

Thank you for your letter of June 15, 2004 regarding the coverage of political issues in television news and public affairs programming. I am pleased to be able to report to you that the ABC Owned Television Stations have a long tradition of being leaders in local news coverage in their communities including coverage of political issues.

As a matter of policy, Disney management does not dictate the amount or percentage of news coverage on any issue or topic at the ABC Owned Television Stations. Our directive to local station management is to maintain the highest standards of journalistic integrity and to be leaders in providing local news and public affairs programming to their communities. Decisions regarding what issues to cover and in what amount are left to the discretion of our outstanding local management.

The ABC Owned Television Station news operations are regarded as among the finest in the industry. The viewers that we serve seem to agree since ten of the ten ABC Owned Television Stations rank #1 or #2 in local news ratings. There can be no better measure of whether our local managers have been making the right decisions regarding the community relevance of their local newscasts.

The Honorable John McCain  
The Honorable Michael K. Powell

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Because our political coverage decisions are made by local management, the precise nature of each station's coverage varies from market to market. However, many of our stations have made a local judgment that the broadcast of extended length candidate debates and forums is an important supplement to daily news coverage of political issues. Examples of local candidate debates and forums broadcast by one of our smaller stations (KFSN, Fresno, CA) and one of our larger stations (WPVI, Philadelphia, PA) illustrate the superior nature of our coverage of political issues.

In 2000 KFSN, Fresno broadcast separate debates during the Primary campaign season for each of the following local political races:

- Fresno Mayor
- Fresno County Supervisor, District No. 2
- Fresno County Supervisor, District No. 3
- Fresno County Supervisor, District No. 4
- Fresno County Supervisor, District No. 5
- Fresno City Council, District No. 2
- Fresno City Council, District No. 6

These Primary debates were followed by 2000 General Election debates for the following races:

- 20<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congressional District
- Fresno Mayor
- Fresno County Supervisor, District No. 2
- Fresno County Council, District No. 2
- Fresno County Council, District No. 4

Attached hereto is a letter dated September 26, 2000 from the League of Women Voters of California in which the League references the effort by the League and the "Alliance for Better Campaigns" to secure commitments from all television stations to air five minutes a night of "candidate-centered discourse" in the 30 days preceding elections. The League letter thanks KFSN "for meeting and exceeding this public commitment." In fact, the League's letter to stations throughout California (also attached) cites KFSN as a "good example" for "providing extensive coverage of the elections through spot news and candidate profiles, and also co-sponsoring debates in local and state races."

KFSN's efforts in 2000 were not an isolated incident. In 2002, in January, February, March and October, KFSN broadcast three local debates and five local candidate forums. Although 2003 was not a regular election year, KFSN broadcast three 30 minute special programs entitled "Ask the Mayor" in January, February and September. And, in 2003, KFSN presented two live 30 minute programs featuring candidates in the Special Gubernatorial Recall Election. So far in 2004 KFSN has broadcast debates for the 20<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congressional District and the 29<sup>th</sup> State Assembly District.

The Honorable John McCain  
The Honorable Michael K. Powell

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As demonstrated in the listing below, ABC Owned Station WPVI, Philadelphia, PA presents an extraordinary history of sponsoring and broadcasting political debates:

WPVI-TV DEBATES 2000-2004

2000 PRIMARY DEBATES:

PA DEMOCRATIC SENATORIAL PRIMARY DEBATE

April 1, 2000 - 7-8 PM (presented by 6ABC & League Women Voters, with Marc Howard, moderator)

NJ REPUBLICAN PRIMARY SENATORIAL DEBATE

May 27, 2000 - 3-4 PM (in partnership with League of NJ - Marc Howard WPVI-TV & Roz Abrams, WABC-TV moderated)

DELAWARE REPUBLICAN PRIMARY GUBERNATORIAL DEBATE

Sat., Sept. 2: 5:30-6 AM & Sun. Sept. 3: 6-6:30 AM (presented by League of Women Voters of Del. & 6ABC in Wilmington Studio with Monica Malpass)

THE 6ABC 2000 VOTE DEBATE SERIES:

PA SENATORIAL DEBATE, Oct. 1: 10-11 AM (in partnership with the Philadelphia NAACP—debate featured the Republican & Democratic candidates & was moderated by Marc Howard)

PA SENATORIAL DEBATE, late night Oct. 19: 12:06 AM-12:36 AM (presented by the League of Women Voters of PA, featuring the lesser-known candidates-- Constitutional Party, Libertarian & Reform Party-- moderated by Monica Malpass.)

DELAWARE DEBATES:

In conjunction with the League of Women Voters of Delaware, WPVI aired (4) separate half-hour debates, taped at the Wilmington studio & moderated by Monica Malpass:

Delaware Gubernatorial Debate – Oct. 22, 2000 – 1-1:30 PM

Delaware Lieutenant Governor's Debate – Oct. 22, 2000 – 2:00-2:30 PM

Delaware Senate Debate – Oct. 22, 2000 – 3:00-3:30 PM

Delaware Congressional Debate – Oct. 22, 2000 – 3:30-4:00 PM

NEW JERSEY SENATORIAL DEBATE: Oct. 22: 10-11 AM (co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of NJ, WABC-TV, & Citizen Voices of The Philadelphia Inquirer and The Star Ledger of Newark, NJ – moderated by WPVI's Marc Howard and

The Honorable John McCain  
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WABC-TV's Roz Abrams, along with a Citizen Voices panel who posed questions to the candidates. Taped at the College of New Jersey.)

NEW JERSEY 3<sup>RD</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE: Oct. 22, 2:30-3:00 PM (co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of NJ & moderated by Trenton Bureau reporter Nora Muchanic.)

PENNSYLVANIA 13<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE: Oct. 29, 10:30-11 AM (with Republican, Democratic & Libertarian candidates & moderated by WPVI's Sunday Live host Wally Kennedy.)

#### 2001 DEBATES

PHILADELPHIA DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY DISTRICT ATTORNEY DEBATE:  
April 29, 2001 – 1:00-2:00 PM (co-sponsored by League of Women Voters of Philadelphia & moderated by Marc Howard.)

NEW JERSEY GOVERNOR'S PRIMARY DEBATE: June 9, 2001 – 1:30-2:30 PM; repeated late night, 2:05-3:05 AM (in partnership with WABC-TV and the NJ League of Women Voters, featuring the New Jersey Republican gubernatorial candidates; moderated by WPVI's Marc Howard & WABC's Roz Abrams.)

NEW JERSEY GOVERNOR'S DEBATE 2001: Oct. 25, 2001 – 7:00-8:00 PM; live from the College of New Jersey; in partnership with the League of Women Voters of NJ and WABC-TV, moderated by Marc Howard/WPVI and Roz Abrams/WABC. An interactive format with reporters from *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Star Ledger* of NJ, and students from Rowan University and the College of NJ.

PENNSYLVANIA SUPREME COURT FORUM: Oct. 28, 2001 – 10:30-11 AM; in partnership with The League of Women Voters of PA Citizen Education Fund; a half-hour discussion with the two candidates on the ballot for the one Supreme Court of Pennsylvania vacancy; moderated by Marc Howard.

#### 2002 DEBATES

PENNSYLVANIA DEMOCRATIC GUBERNATORIAL DEBATE: May 4, 2002, 7:00-8:00 PM (in partnership with League of Women Voters of PA, The Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce & the Philadelphia chapter of the NAACP; a live debate at the Phila. studio, moderated by WPVI's Marc Howard, with reporter Vernon Odom, featuring the Democratic candidates for Governor of PA.)

The Honorable John McCain  
The Honorable Michael K. Powell

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NEW JERSEY PRIMARY REPUBLICAN SENATE DEBATE: May 25, 2002, 2:00-3:00 PM. (in partnership with League of Women Voters of NJ & WABC-TV in New York—taped at WPVI's Trenton studio & moderated by Marc Howard/WPVI and Roz Abrams/WABC, with panelists from New Jersey's *Star Ledger* and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.)

PENNSYLVANIA GUBERNATORIAL DEBATE: Oct. 29, 2002, 7:00-8:00 PM (live debate in partnership with League of Women Voters of PA, the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce and the Philadelphia NAACP; moderated by Jim Gardner, with reporter Vernon Odom.)

NEW JERSEY SENATE DEBATE: A one-hour debate (to be aired October 27, from 10-11 AM, in partnership with League of Women Voters of NJ and WABC-TV of New York) was offered to the Republican (Douglas Forrester) & Democratic (Frank Lautenberg) candidates. Frank Lautenberg, the Democratic candidate, refused the invitation. The time was offered, but the debate did not happen.

#### 2003 DEBATES

PENNSYLVANIA SUPREME COURT FORUM: Sept. 21, 2003, 10:30-11:00 AM; repeated late night, 2:05-2:35 AM (in partnership with the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Education Fund). A half-hour discussion with the two candidates on the ballot for the one Supreme Court of PA vacancy. Moderated by WPVI's Wally Kennedy.

THE PHILADELPHIA MAYORAL DEBATE: Oct. 21, 2003, 7:00-8:00 PM. (a live debate from the National Constitution Center, in partnership with the League of Women Voters of Philadelphia, the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce and the Philadelphia NAACP, moderated by Jim Gardner with a panel of print and broadcast journalists.)

#### 2004 PRIMARY DEBATES

PENNSYLVANIA REPUBLICAN SENATORIAL DEBATE: A debate between Senator Arlen Specter and Congressman Pat Toomey, candidates for the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate, was presented by the Pennsylvania Association of Broadcasters Educational Foundation, Pennsylvania Cable Network, The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Education Fund and the Pennsylvania Newspaper Association. The debate was taped at WTAJ-TV, Altoona, and was moderated by John Baer of the Philadelphia Daily News. WPVI-TV recorded the debate via satellite on April 3, 2004, for broadcast on Sunday, April 4, 2004, from 10:00-11:00 A.M.

The Honorable John McCain  
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#### CAMPAIGN 2004

"Campaign 2004," a series of four primary debates, aired on WPVI-TV on Sunday, April 18, 2004, as follows. (The 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional debates were sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Philadelphia; the PA Attorney General debates were sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Education Fund.)

*The Pennsylvania 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional Democratic Primary Debate* aired 1:00-1:30 P.M., Moderated by Action News Anchor Monica Malpass.

*The Pennsylvania 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional Republican Primary Debate* aired 1:30-2:00 P.M. Moderated by Action News Anchor Monica Malpass.

*The PA Attorney General Democratic Primary Debate* aired 2:00-2:30 P.M. Moderated by Action News Anchor Rick Williams.

*The PA Attorney General Republican Primary Debate* aired 2:30-3:00 P.M. Moderated by Action News Anchor Rick Williams.

On October 23, 2003, the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania honored WPVI President and General Manager Dave Davis at the League's Civic Leadership Reception. At the reception the League recognized WPVI as "the station of record for political debates, working closely with the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania and other organizations."

The other ABC Owned Television Stations also have focused on long form debates as a way to supplement their daily political news coverage. In 2000, WABC, New York, NY broadcast debates for the New Jersey Republican Senatorial Primary Election and the New Jersey Senatorial General Election. In 2001, WABC broadcast debates for the New Jersey Gubernatorial Primary, the New York Mayoral Primary, the New Jersey Gubernatorial General Election and the New York Mayoral General Election. In 2002, WABC broadcast debates for the New Jersey Republican Senatorial Primary and the New York Gubernatorial General Election.

In 2000, WTVD Raleigh-Durham, NC participated in an innovative statewide effort entitled, "Your Voice, Your Vote" with newspapers and other television stations throughout North Carolina. Voters across the state were polled on their views regarding major issues. Statewide candidates were then interviewed regarding their positions on those issues. WTVD broadcast a continuing series of reports highlighting voter and candidate positions on statewide issues. In 2001, WTVD broadcast Mayoral debates for the cities of Raleigh and Durham. In 2002, WTVD broadcast a Senatorial debate and debates for North Carolina's 1<sup>st</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional Districts. In 2003, WTVD broadcast Mayoral debates for the cities of Raleigh and Cary and a candidate's forum for the Durham City Council.

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In 2002, station KABC, Los Angeles, CA broadcast three Gubernatorial debates. Station KGO, San Francisco, CA broadcast a Gubernatorial debate in 2002 and Mayoral debates in 2001 and 2003. WJRT, Flint, MI, features "candidate profiles" in local newscasts and broadcast Democrat and Republican Gubernatorial Primary debates in 2002. Station WLS, Chicago, IL, works with the Illinois League of Women Voters to present debates including 2002 debates for the U.S. Senate race, the Illinois Gubernatorial race and the Illinois Attorney General race. WTVG, Toledo, OH, presented two issue focused election special broadcasts in November 2000, a Toledo Mayoral debate in 2001 and 2001 candidate forums for Toledo Municipal Court Clerk, Oregon, OH Mayor, and other offices. In 2003, KTRK, Houston broadcast two debates in the Houston Mayoral race. Also in 2003, KTRK worked with Harris County officials on a 12 hour "Voterthon" that resulted in more than 9,000 new voter registrations. Attached is a letter to Chairman Powell from a Harris County official regarding this extraordinary effort.

Significantly, the ABC Owned Television Stations are using the multi-cast capability of our new digital transmissions to give viewers additional opportunities to see our political coverage and to expand that coverage. Each of the ABC Stations has begun to utilize a second digital broadcast stream to provide viewers with time-diverse options to see our local news and public affairs programming. Political debates are included in the local programming that is showcased on this second digital stream. These multi-casts provide viewers with multiple different opportunities to watch a debate between the date of the debate and the date of the election greatly expanding the reach and the impact of the debate.

ABC's digital multi-casts can enhance political coverage in other ways. For example, on the night of the recent California Gubernatorial election, ABC's KFSN, Fresno, Ca. utilized its second digital stream to broadcast continuous real-time election results as a supplement to its regular election coverage. Viewers who wanted to check vote totals throughout the evening (without "spin" or commentary), could simply tune to KFSN's second digital stream.

Of course, in addition to local news coverage, our stations also bring to their viewers the very extensive political and campaign coverage presented by ABC News in the network programs World News Tonight, Nightline, This Week, Good Morning America, World News Now, and newsmagazines PrimeTime Live and 20/20. In news reports, interviews, and in-depth features, these network programs will deliver hours of coverage of the presidential campaign and of notable congressional and state races as well.

The Honorable John McCain  
The Honorable Michael K. Powell

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I want to assure you that the ABC Owned Television Stations will continue in their proud tradition as leaders in presenting local news and information, including political coverage, to the viewers in the markets that we serve. We believe that outstanding local community service is both our obligation and the key to operating a successful local television station. We hope that all public policy makers will exercise great care in considering any proposals that would disrupt or inhibit consumer access to the extraordinary political coverage and other local news and public affairs programming provided by the ABC Owned Television Stations and other broadcasters.

We thank you for your letter and we look forward to a continuing dialogue on these issues.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Iger', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert A. Iger  
6/21/04

Attachments

cc: The Honorable Ernest F. Hollings  
The Honorable Conrad Burns  
The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
The Honorable Kathleen Q. Abernathy  
The Honorable Jonathon S. Adelstein  
The Honorable Michael J. Copps  
The Honorable Kevin J. Martin  
The Honorable Joe Barton  
The Honorable John D. Dingell  
The Honorable Fred Upton  
The Honorable Edward J. Markey





**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA  
EDUCATION FUND**

926 J Street, Suite 515, Sacramento, California 95814

(916) 442-7215 ■ Fax (916) 442-7362

Web site: [www.ca.lwv.org](http://www.ca.lwv.org) ■ E-mail: [lwvc@jps.net](mailto:lwvc@jps.net)

September 26, 2000

**OFFICERS**

*President*  
Gail Dryden  
Carmel

*Executive Vice President*  
Barbara Inatsugu  
Santa Monica

*Secretary*  
Janis Hirohama  
Manhattan Beach

*Treasurer*  
Deborah Brooks  
Browns Valley

**DIRECTORS**

*Membership Development*  
Carrie Anabo  
Santa Rosa

*Voter Service*  
Jacquie Canfield  
Fresno

*Development*  
Linda Fawcett  
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*Government*  
Doris Fine  
Berkeley

*Legislation*  
Anne Henderson  
Berkeley

*Social Policy*  
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*Natural Resources*  
Kim Longworth  
Winters

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Carlsbad

*Citizen Education*  
Ellen Taylor  
Claremont

*Community Development*  
Janet Wells  
Palo Alto

*Communications*  
Carol West  
Solana Beach

**STATE OFFICE**

*Office Administrator*  
Peggy Beggs

*Program Director*  
Trudy Schafer

Ms. Valari Dobson-Staab  
KFSN General Manager  
1777 G Street  
Fresno, CA 93706-1688

Dear Ms. Dobson-Staab:

The League of Women Voters of California Education Fund, in cooperation with the Alliance for Better Campaigns, has written to every television station in California making the modest request that they air five minutes a night of "candidate-centered discourse" in the 30 days preceding the November election.

In that letter (a copy is enclosed), we have cited your station's extensive commitment to election coverage. Through spot news pieces, candidate profiles and by cosponsoring debates in local and state races, KFSN-TV is providing local citizens with the information they desperately need to make election decisions.

As part of the licensing agreement to operate the public's airwaves, all broadcasters are pledged to serve the public's interest, and there is no greater public service than providing voters information which is free from the rhetoric and half-truths that flood the airwaves in the form of political ads.

The League of Women Voters of California Education Fund would like thank KFSN-TV for meeting and exceeding this public commitment. With a similar commitment to unbiased and informative election coverage by other television stations, we hope to break the hold that money and ads have on our political campaigns and return political power to the voter.

Sincerely,

Gail D. Dryden  
President

**RECEIVED**

SEP 29 2000

**GEN. MGR-KFSNTV**



## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA EDUCATION FUND

926 J Street, Suite 515, Sacramento, California 95814  
(916) 442-7215 ■ Fax (916) 442-7362  
Web site: [www.ca.lwv.org](http://www.ca.lwv.org) ■ E-mail: [lwvc@jps.net](mailto:lwvc@jps.net)

September 26, 2000

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Palo Alto

*Communications*  
Carol West  
Solana Beach

### STATE OFFICE

*Office Administrator*  
Peggi Beggs

*Program Director*  
Trudy Schafer

Ms. Valari Dobson-Staab  
KFSN General Manager  
1777 G Street  
Fresno, CA 93706-1688

*Sample*

Dear Ms. Dobson-Staab:

As political contributions flood into the 2000 election campaign at unprecedented levels, the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund urges you to open the airwaves to a different kind of campaign communication, one whose currency is ideas, not money.

Together with the Alliance for Better Campaigns, we write to voice our concern – and to make an appeal – about the role of broadcasters in our democracy. Our concern is that campaign contributions will provide TV stations up to \$1 billion for political ads, in what Senator John McCain (R-AZ) has called “one of the greatest scams in American history,” referring to the enormous value of digital TV licenses broadcasters have been given free. It is the public, not the broadcasters, that owns the airwaves. In addition, many citizens find these ads intrusive; they are a substantial factor in the growing public apathy and cynicism about our election process and the money chase that funds it.

We urge you to adopt the practice recommended by the Alliance for Better Campaigns: Air five minutes a night of “candidate-centered discourse” in the 30 days preceding the November election. Such broadcasts could cover candidates for federal, state and local offices, as appropriate. The segments could assume a variety of forms, including interviews, issue statements or mini-debates. A good example is KFSN-TV Fresno, which is providing extensive coverage of the elections through spot news and candidate profiles, and also co-sponsoring debates in local and state races.

Broadcasters have been given licenses valued at many billions of dollars to operate the public’s airwaves. In return, you have pledged to serve the public interest. There is no greater public service than providing citizens with the information they need to choose their representatives, and to help break the hold that money and ads have on our political campaigns. It is not too late to make this election different. Our future depends on it.

Sincerely,

Gail D. Dryden  
President



January 27, 2004

The Honorable Michael Powell  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

RE: KTRK-TV ABC Channel 13

Dear Chairman Powell:

We are writing in support of KTRK-TV ABC Channel 13 and the important work they do in the community. We know of this work because we too serve the community as a large organization in the nation's third largest county responsible for a voter registration roll of 1.8 million, 3.7 million automobile transactions, and 1.3 million property tax accounts.

In 2003, the Harris County Tax Office entered into a unique partnership with KTRK-TV to register all eligible citizens to vote as part of the Tax Office's annual Make Your Voice Heard voter registration drive. The endeavor was Voterthon 2003.



Much like a telethon, Voterthon 2003 began at 7 a.m. at the end of the morning newscast, and ended at 7 p.m. at the end of the evening newscast. Instead of the usual solicitation of funds, Voterthon 2003 encouraged eligible citizens to register to vote.

Throughout the daily newscasts, Channel 13 reporter Alissa Rivas challenged viewers to stop by their local Tax Office or visit the Channel 13 studios to register to vote. Meanwhile, anchors in the studio encouraged the public to do the same.

The Tax Office, however, worked most closely with Community Affairs Director Denise Bates who tirelessly coordinated logistics for a smooth production.

For the first time in Tax Office history, an off-site location became an official Tax Office. During the Voterthon, the Channel 13 studios served as a Tax Office processing and issuing voter registration certificates to eligible applicants.

Our partnership garnered an additional 9,014 registered voters as a direct result of the Voterthon! With community support, the Tax Office registered 105,341 new voters in 2003, thanks in no small part to Channel 13.



The Tax Office offers its sincerest thanks to the KTRK-TV ABC Channel 13 family for their public service efforts.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Paul Bettencourt".

Paul Bettencourt  
Tax Assessor-Collector and Voter Registrar  
Harris County, Texas

cc: Henry Florshelm

Harris County Tax Office

1001 Preston

Houston, Texas 77002

713 366-2000



Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

# Commission Meeting Agenda

A Public Notice of the Federal Communications  
Commission  
News Media Information (202) 418-0500  
Fax-On-Demand (202) 418-2830  
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>  
<ftp.fcc.gov>

September 2, 2004

## **FCC TO HOLD OPEN COMMISSION MEETING** **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2004**

The Federal Communications Commission will hold an Open Meeting on the subjects listed below on Thursday, September 9, 2004, which is scheduled to commence at 9:30 a.m. in Room TW-C305, at 445 12th Street, S. W., Washington, D.C.

<b><u>ITEM NO.</u></b>	<b><u>BUREAU</u></b>	<b><u>SUBJECT</u></b>
1	INTERNATIONAL	The International Bureau will present the annual report on satellites, the market and the FCC.
2	WIRELESS TELE- COMMUNICATIONS	<p><b>TITLE:</b> Implementation of Section 6002(b) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993; Annual Report and Analysis of Competitive Market Conditions with Respect to Commercial Mobile Services (WT Docket No. 04-111).</p> <p><b>SUMMARY:</b> The Commission will consider a Ninth Annual Report and Analysis of Competitive Market Conditions With Respect to Commercial Mobile Services.</p>

\*The summaries listed in this notice are intended for the use of the public attending open Commission meetings. Information not summarized may also be considered at such meetings. Consequently these summaries should not be interpreted to limit the Commission's authority to consider any relevant information.

## WIRELINER COMPETITION

**TITLE:** Inquiry Concerning the Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion, and Possible Steps to Accelerate Such Deployment Pursuant to Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (GN Docket No. 04-54).

**SUMMARY:** The Commission will consider a Fourth Report concluding the Commission's fourth inquiry concerning the deployment of advanced telecommunications capability to all Americans pursuant to Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

## WIRELIN COMPETITION

**TITLE:** Telephone Number Portability (CC Docket No. 95-116).

**SUMMARY:** The Commission will consider a Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on the recommendation of the North American Numbering Council (NANC), the Commission's advisory committee on numbering issues, for reducing the time interval for intermodal porting (porting between wireline and wireless carriers).

# WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**TITLE:** Service Rules for Advanced Wireless Services in the 1915-1920 MHz, 1995-2000 MHz, 2020-2025 MHz, and 2175-2180 MHz.

**SUMMARY:** The Commission will consider a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking proposing licensing, technical, and operational rules to govern the use of additional spectrum designated for Advanced Wireless Services.

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**OFFICE OF  
ENGINEERING AND  
TECHNOLOGY**

**TITLE:** Amendment of Part 2 of the Commission's Rules to Allocate Spectrum Below 3 GHz for Mobile and Fixed Services to Support the Introduction of New Advanced Wireless Services, including Third Generation Wireless Systems (ET Docket No. 00-258); Petition for Rulemaking of the Wireless Information Networks Forum Concerning the Unlicensed Personal Communications Service (RM-9498); Petition for Rulemaking of UTStarcom, Inc., Concerning the Unlicensed Personal Communications Service (RM-10024); and Amendment of Section 2.106 of the Commission's Rules to Allocate Spectrum at 2 GHz for use by the Mobile-Satellite Service (ET Docket No. 95-18).

**SUMMARY:** The Commission will consider a Sixth Report and Order, Third Memorandum Opinion and Order, and Fifth Memorandum Opinion and Order concerning spectrum for the provisions of new services, including Advanced Wireless Services.

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**MEDIA**

**TITLE:** Amendment of Parts 73 and 74 of the Commission's Rules to Establish Rules for Digital Low Power Television, Television Translator, and Television Booster Station and to Amend Rules for Digital Class A Television Stations (MB Docket No. 03-185).

**SUMMARY:** The Commission will consider a Report and Order establishing service rules and policies for digital low power television and television translator stations and modifying certain rules applicable to digital Class A television stations.

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**MEDIA**

**TITLE:** Children's Television Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters (MM Docket No. 00-167).

**SUMMARY:** The Commission will consider a Report and Order concerning the obligation of television broadcasters to serve children in their audience.

Additional information concerning this meeting may be obtained from Audrey Spivack or David Fiske, Office of Media Relations, (202) 418-0500; TTY 1-888-835-5322. Audio/Video coverage of the meeting will be broadcast live over the Internet from the FCC's Audio/Video Events web page at [www.fcc.gov/realaudio](http://www.fcc.gov/realaudio).

For a fee this meeting can be viewed live over George Mason University's Capitol Connection. The Capitol Connection also will carry the meeting live via the Internet. To purchase these services call (703) 993-3100 or go to [www.capitolconnection.gmu.edu](http://www.capitolconnection.gmu.edu). Audio and video tapes of this meeting can be purchased from CACI Productions, 14151 Park Meadow Drive, Chantilly, VA 20151, (703) 679-3851.

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